News Releases - 2007

James Rolfe wins 2006 Jules Léger Prize for New Chamber Music

Ottawa, January 4, 2007 – The Canada Council for the Arts announced today that the work *raW* by Toronto composer James Rolfe is the winner of the 2006 Jules Léger Prize for New Chamber Music. *raW* was commissioned by Ergo Ensemble, through a grant from the Toronto Arts Council, and premiered in October 2003.

Mr. Rolfe said that *raW* "was written by filtering J. S. Bach's *Second Brandenburg Concerto* through Bob Marley's *War* (first movement), Burning Spear's *The Invasion* (second movement), and John Philip Sousa's *Stars and Stripes Forever* (third movement). *raW* was written during the buildup to the American invasion of Iraq."

Awarded annually in partnership with the Canadian Music Centre and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation/Société Radio-Canada, the Jules Léger Prize for New Chamber Music is designed to encourage the creation of new Canadian chamber music and to foster its performance by Canadian chamber groups. The $7,500 prize was established in 1978 by the Right Honourable Jules Léger, then Governor General of Canada.

The competition for the prize is administered by the Canadian Music Centre. The Canada Council funds the award, selects the peer assessment committee and organizes the prize presentation ceremony. Every year, the winning work is broadcast nationally by CBC Radio Two and Espace musique, Radio-Canada's music network.

The prize will be presented at the Montreal/New Music International Festival, on the evening of the Continuum Ensemble concert which will include a performance of *raW*. The concert will be held on **Wednesday, March 7 at 9:30 p.m.**, at the Redpath Hall, located on the downtown McGill University campus, 3461 McTavish in Montreal. *raW* will be broadcast by the new music show *Two New Hours* with host Larry Lake on CBC Radio Two, Sunday March 18, after 10 p.m., and on Espace Musique at a date and time to be confirmed.

The members of the peer assessment committee for the 2006 Jules Léger Prize were professor and composer Howard Bashaw (Edmonton), composer and pianist Alice Ping Yee Ho (Toronto) and composer and pianist André Ristic (Montreal). Mr. Ristic, also a member of the Trio Fibonacci, is a previous winner of the Jules Léger Prize. The committee was a "blind jury" which evaluated the works without knowing the names of the composers.

The jury said that they "encountered an unprecedented number of submissions - 115 in total. Representing a wide spectrum of chamber media, styles and aesthetics, the submissions revealed an extraordinary diversity of artistic excellence."

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In awarding the prize to Mr. Rolfe, the jury said: "The award-winning work *raW* by James Rolfe is a truly original statement whose economical - if not minimal - surface veils deeper layers rich with inference, wit and meaning. Appealing on many levels of perception, *raW* brings a new dimension to an already diverse genre."

The jury made a special mention of two other works submitted for the Jules Léger Prize: *Per essere fresco* by Giorgio Magnanensi (Roberts Creek, British Columbia) and *Le chêne et le roseau* by Analia Llugdar (Montreal).

The jury praised *Per essere fresco* by Giorgio Magnanensi by saying: "Magnanensi's composition is a powerful, compelling work revealing maturity in artistic vision and skill. Subtle layers of submerged dimensions are exposed within an extremely virtuosic and gripping musical exterior."

The jury also praised *Le chêne et le roseau* by Analia Llugdar and said: "the work by Analia Llugdar is defined by poetic vision wherein a solo cello and choir of flutes unfold a rich journey through transforming textures and colours."

Previous winners of the Jules Léger Prize include Linda Catlin Smith, Patrick Saint-Denis, Éric Morin, Yannick Plamondon, Chris Paul Harman, André Ristic, Alexina Louie, Michael Oesterle, Omar Daniel, Christos Hatzis, John Burke, Peter Paul Koprowski, Bruce Mather, John Rea, Donald Steven, Michael Colgrass, Denys Bouliane, Michel Longtin, Brian Cherney, John Hawkins, Walter Boudreau, Serge Garant and R. Murray Schafer.

James Rolfe

Toronto composer James Rolfe has been commissioned and performed by ensembles in Canada (including Arraymusic, Continuum, Esprit Orchestra, Soundstreams, and Vancouver New Music), the USA (Bang on a Can All-Stars, Cassatt Quartet), Europe (Ensemble Contrechamps de Genève, Ensemble Avant Garde, Ives Ensemble, Ixion Ensemble, Nash Ensemble, and Nieuw Ensemble), and New Zealand (175 East). He is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2000, the K. M. Hunter Music Award in 2003, and the 2005 Louis Applebaum Composers Award.

Mr. Rolfe writes music for chamber ensemble, orchestra, choir, voice, and the operatic stage. *Beatrice Chancy*, a tragic opera set in Nova Scotia during the last days of slavery, received an extraordinary reception during productions by The Queen of Puddings Music Theatre Company between 1998 and 2001 in Toronto, Dartmouth, and Edmonton. *Elijah's Kite*, an opera for children, was premiered in New York in April 2006 by Tapestry New Opera Works with the Manhattan School of Music, and given its Canadian premiere at Rideau Hall in October 2006. His new opera *Swoon* was acclaimed by critics and

audiences alike at its December 2006 premiere by the Canadian Opera Company. Mr. Rolfe is currently working on new operas for the Queen of Puddings and for the Toronto Masque Theatre.

General information

In addition to its principal role of promoting and fostering the arts in Canada, the Canada Council for the Arts, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2007, administers and awards prizes and fellowships to over 100 artists and scholars annually. These include the Governor General's Literary Awards, the Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts, the Walter Carsen Prize for Excellence in the Performing Arts, the Canada Council for the Arts Molson Prizes, the Killam Prizes and the Killam Research Fellowships. Other music awards include the Sylva Gelber Foundation Award, the Virginia Parker Prize, the Bernard Diamant Prize, and loans of fine stringed instruments through the Musical Instrument Bank.

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